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THE DREAMING LYRIST,

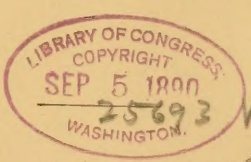
A POEM

BY

SAMUEL WATSON WHEELER.

"Is this a dream? Then waking would be pain."

—*Old Song.*



PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR
AT
1003 Penn St., Camden, N. J.

1890.

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1890
By SAMUEL WATSON WHEELER.

a.m.P., June 22, 1931

Preface.

In the following poem the author does not think that many persons will dispute his claim that it is, in appearance, one of the most unique in the language. No one can for a moment doubt that considerable labor has been expended upon its publication. Every page represents the physical as well as mental activity of the writer. Through the medium of Edison's inventive genius the reader is presented with something more than a mere facsimile of the author's handwriting — he, in fact, has in his possession the impression of the original writing. Whether this adds to the merits of the production is a question; but that it will be appreciated by his immediate friends he does not doubt. They will, at least, see in it an attempt to

copy the old masters in a style similar in appearance to that which was extant before the art of printing was discovered.

As to the merits of the Dreaming Lyrist as a poem, the author leaves this decision to others. That it has faults he knows. Possibly many laws of versification and construction have been violated, but there is no claim to perfection made. With such great poets as Shakespeare, Milton, Byron, and a host of others, violating the same laws, the author congratulates himself that he is in distinguished company. That the poem has merits the author believes. That the work will be appreciatively read by his friends he does not doubt. For that class of humanity that make its daily bread by tearing down that which other men have reared the author would say he cares not even though the poem is held up to ridicule and censure by such a clique. He counts honest criticism from only honest minds.

It may be interesting to know that the poem was written some years ago, when the author was twenty-two years of age.

Trusting some will enjoy his labors, he remains, truly,

The Author.

The Dreaming Lyrist.

Canto 1.

I will sing of one in Dreamland—
One whose heart was warm and tender—
One who loved with greatest passion—
One who loved a sweet-faced maiden—
One o'erwhom a dream encircled
With its odors sweet, refreshing.
Ah, this youth he loved a maiden
Fair as she who loved Adonis,
Fair as she who loved Narcissus,
Or as fair as that Greek Goddess—
Golden-haired and far-famed Juno!
Yes, this maiden was a fair one,
But she cared not for the lover—
Knew not of that depth of passion
Which within his soul was burning;

Knew not how his heart was aching
For the love she would not give him;
Only wondered at the passion—
The great passion which controlled him.

Near a great and turning river,
Near a heaving, flowing river
That is laughing in the sunlight;
Near the calm and gleaming river
That is smiling in the moonbeam;
Near a river ever changing
Dwelt this youth whose heart was passion.
In the stream he saw reflected
Living forms as mermaids playing;
In the forests near the river
Every leaflet was a spirit,
Every breath of wind was music—
Oftimes fierce and maddened music—
Oftimes like the harp Æolian
Lingering would it sound seraphic

In its melody and softness;
Sometimes strange, unearthly music
Full of doubts as of the dying.

When a storm of sheeted lightning
Burst with thunder in the midnight,
Tearing branches from the forests—
Making of the rivers mad waves—
Covering the earth with dark clouds—
He would feel no start of terror:
His firm nerves would never tremble
Save with rapture at the workings
Of the storm in all its terrors—
At the blinding glare of lightning;
For he saw a Spirit in them—
In the screaming of the fierce wind—
In the clouds and in the blackness;
Heard a voice in the deep thunder—
Saw the pinion of an angel
As the lightning flazed all'ere him!

On an afternoon in Autumn
Did he start when a journey;
Feeling sad and seeking freedom—
The wild freedom of the forest:
Where he might converse with Nature
Free and undisturbed by strangers—
Strangers all the world around him
For he could not call them kindred.
In his hand a lyre he carried
Which was strung with strings all golden
(For he carried into Nature—
Nature whom he loved so dearly—
When he was alone and near her;
And the strains, perchance, were tender—
Tender as his soul poetic
Could produce by such a [illegible] string!)

As he journeyed birds were singing;
Birds of glorious colored plumage;
And, while by the trees were humming

As they sipped from off the wild flower –
Sipped the honey and the beauty
From the trembling, nodding wild flower.
Fair the day and bright the sunlight
As it glanced upon the traveler –
Gently glanced, as breezes softly
Blew upon the leaves and waved them.

Soon he reached where trees were towering
On the face of a great hillside;
And he clambered to the summit
Over rocks, and stones, and mosses;
And anon he brushed the brakes
Which were in the way he journeyed
And they threw their long arms to him
Seeking to impede his travel;
And anon they touched the harp-strings,
And the harp cried out with music,
Sad, sweet music at the rough touch,
And the birds that heard the music

Carolled loudly and were joyful.

When at last he reached the summit
What a vision was before him!
There a scene unfolded beauty—
Beauty of sublimest vision!
There, before him, rolled the Hudson:
Great, majestic, beauteous River!
And it wound around its mountains
In the distance, and beneath him,
On its smooth, unruffled surface
Floated there the clouds reflected:
Silver clouds in seas of azure—
And near to the banks the frost leaves
Seemed to start from out the river
As the trees were there reflected—
Souls of trees long since departed!

At the sight of this fair vision
That sad heart was filled with gladness,

And the voice with rapture swelling
Filled the forest with sweet music;
And as birds were hushed to silence
Thus the poet touched his harp-strings.

Song:

I will tell thee of a river
That rolls toward the deep, blue ocean;
Sunbeams o'er its surface quiver
As its dark waves keep in motion;
On its either side are towering,
Like great giants that are sleeping,
Hills of stature tall, and lowering—
Spirits, who are ever keeping
This great river from o'erflowing:
Though its greatest freshets rising,
With their storms and loud winds blowing,
They can never, by increasing,
Immerse their great towering gods
Who have stood there since the floods.

And the river, ever flowing,

Winds along in wondrous twining,
Whilst the trees each side are growing
(When the Autumn sun is shining)
Into foliage of such turning
One feels looking on a painting
Made by One of marvelous learning,
And the conscious soul, near fainting,
Thinks upon the Painter — God,
Who produced it with his nod!

Flow along great stream, forever —
Thus thy Maker's wish fulfilling;
And to him the disbeliever,
With thy silent voice instilling
This great truth: that He, whose nod
Hath produced thee, is this God!

And the song unto the river
It was ended; and the poet,
Gazing where his footsteps tarried,

Saw that all around was mossy—
Moss it grew as if inviting
Travelers to forego their travels;
Bright green moss—amon a blue-bell
Puffed above the mossy carpet.

As the poet felt aweary
There upon the bed of mosses
Did he lay him down and rested;
And his eyelids they were heavy
At the heat of Autumn's sunshine.
As he lay there, peaceful, dreaming,
Half awake and half in Dreamland
Melancholy thoughts came o'er him;
And the past was spread before him—
And although the scene around him
Would have cheered the hearts of angels,
His mind wandered to the dear past;
And with listless fingers running
O'er the golden, tuneful harp-strings

Thus, with voice most low, pathetic,
Did he give his thoughts expression:

Song.

Sadly I pass through a world wild and dreary,
No loved one near to give peace to my heart;
No one to welcome me when I am weary,
No one to heal by a smile Sorrow's smart.

O, cruel Earth, why to me are you stranger,
When I have love – O, such love – to bestow?
Will the wild passion within me endanger
Joys which are others' and change them to woe?

You are a stranger to passions within me!
You cannot know of a throbbing heart's fire!
You are a stranger and so will not win me –
I gave you love, and you spurned my desire!

Then we must part as unknown to each other:
Strangers we live and as strangers we die;

In that near future I may find another—
One that is kindred—for this do I sigh.

Then in silence for some moments,
All the memory of his passion—
How his true, true heart was broken—
How Love's deadly arrow pierced him—
What a wound it left behind it—
Came upon his soul like lightning;
And a sudden strain his harp-strings
Sang of Love and its sharp arrow!

Song to Love.

1.
Cupid's arrow, such they name thee—
Well, they've named aright—in part;
Such a cruel piercer deeply
Hurt it leaves a wounded heart,
And a groan!

2.
Thou canst make the broken-hearted
Bring to memory the days

Long before the two were parted—
When, unheeded, fell the rays
From his soul!

3.
Ah, he loved her—can I say it?
But the love was not returned:
Now through all the earth he wanders
With a name forever burned
On his heart!

4.
Antidotes will not allay it,
Though he seek the whole world o'er;
Nothing gives the boon he craveth—
He can find it nevermore
But in death!

As the melody was lingering
On the air that waited for it,
The sweet singer's hand was searching
Near his heart for something dearer

Than all of his earth's treasures were;
He soon found what he was seeking –
It was naught but a fair wheat-spear;
But the sight of it caused tear-drops
That did cloud the poet's vision;
For that wheat-spear long before this
Had been given him by the maiden;
And his life, pregnant with bliss,
Sought the light; then his harp sang:

Song.

It is only a spear of wheat –
As I see it there comes to mind
An angelic face, in sin and sweet
The light leaves a shade behind!
O, the face I can ne'er forget;
And the loss – yes, I feel it yet!

It is only a spear of wheat,
And 'tis broken and withered, too,
Like this heart of mine which still doth beat

With the love that was as true!
And that love which my boyhood gave
Off my heart it has made a grave!

As the song died to an echo
Close unto him drew that strange one
Whose hushed footsteps no one hears —
Who can touch the trembling eyelid
And seal all the mind to Slumber:
He, the god, is close relation
To the god of death's dominion
One* who speaks with tongue of angel
Tells us Sleep is Death's twin brother!

And Sleep drew close to the poet,
And reaching his hand out to him,
Silently he touched the eyelids,
And the poet sank to Slumber.

Then away the god of Slumber

* Homer.

On the sunbeams and the cool winds
Sped unto his cave at Lemnos
Where he might enjoy the silence..

Then there came unto the poet
One whose mien was mild, though queenly,
And she kissed the pure, white forehead
Of the poet,— and around him
Came a scene with colors blended,
Fair as bright Elysian bowers —
She was known as queen of Dreamland;
This fair goddess who came near him.

And the poet, in his slumber,
Saw the scene which was before him
When he was awake and singing
Of the mighty stream before him —
'Twas the same, and yet 'twas strangely
Blended with an unknown picture
Which came from the spell that rested

On the poet in his slumber.
While the poet lay in Dreamland
Through the windows of his fancy
Did he think he saw before him
One who was to him a stranger:
Like a spirit, or a goddess,
Did the fair one seem before him;
For her eyes were blue as azure,
And her hair like waving sunbeams,
And her face like tinted ivory,
And her mouth like a sweet ruby
Curving 'round the pearls within it,
And her breath was like the rose's
When it giveth sweetest perfume —
When it hath awaked from slumber;
And her bosom, rising, falling,
Seemed like two fair budding lilies
That are filled with life and motion
And are bending to the breezes;
And the poet's soul, enraptured,

Drank these words of rarest sweetness:

"Poet why dost thou so sadly
Mourn for love which is denied thee?
Dost thou not see that the world's love
Is so far removed, beneath thee,
That it cannot reach up to thee.
And knows not thy soul, poetic?
See! I am the nymph to love thee—
I am one who can be loving—
I have waited long to tell thee
Of that passion dwelling in me—
Of that sorrow as I saw thee
Speak thy love to one so human
As the maid who could not love thee.
I am fairer than the maiden—
I can love far more than earth can;
My soul drinks with joy thy image
And I dwell in rapture—gazing!"

Thus the spirit spoke unto him

In the poet's dream or vision;
And with breath nearly suspended,
And with heart throbbing emotions,
Thus he answered her – the fair one –
This sweet spirit of his vision:

"Heavenly one, with joy I see thee,
And with joy I hear thee speaking
Words which are to me as music –
Music most divine – seraphic!
If I am so loved, sweet spirit,
Who is she that me addresses?"

"I am called," replied the spirit,
"Helen, by those who know me
In the heaven behind the azure
Which hides now from earthly vision;
But to you I am the sister
Of the soul that dwells within thee."

Then the poet's face was clouded;

And he asked the beauteous spirit
What she meant by such strange language,
Then replied the fair AEolen:

"Dost thou know that when created
There was given to thee a spirit—
One who was to ever guard thee
From the rough and troubled touches
Of the world's cold careless fingers,
Which would ever seek thy heart-strings?"

"Is it true?" he cried in rapture,
Springing up and leaping toward her,
"Then 'tis thee I have been seeking
Through this world so cold and dreary;
It is thee whose love I pine for—
It is thee, I thought, who left me
Filled with sorrow—broken-hearted!
Let me die now, having gained thee
That we know no separation!"

As he spoke he clasped her to him —
Clasped the spirit to his bosom;
And with tears of joy he kissed her —
Feeding heaven from off her sweet lips.

"If thou lovest as thou sayest,"
Quoth the spirit of his vision,
"Thou wilt leave this cold earth with me
And seek yonder fields Elysian.
Wilt thou follow me wherever
I shall guide thee? Speak, my loved one."

Then the poet answered gladly:
"I will go where'er thou leadest —
Though it be through Styx's river —
Though it be in darkest Hades —
In heaven's glories or hell's flamings —
I will follow thee — and gladly!"

Then the spirit spoke unto him:

"We should now no longer tarry;
Come, give me thy hand I'll guide thee
Safely over to Elysium."

Then the poet answered: "Stay thee
For an instant while my harp-strings
Sing a farewell to the drear world
Which I now shall leave forever."

Taking up his harp the poet
To the world thus sung his farewell:

Song:

Farewell, O Earth, farewell!
Your joys no longer lure:
Your beauties fade before my sight,
And soon will sink to endless night—
I seek for those which know no blight—
For Beauties lasting—sure!
O, Earth, farewell!

Farewell ye Birds, farewell!

Your songs are lost to me;
No more shall I your voices hear—
Your bright forms will no more appear
Before my eyes and my heart cheer—
I seek eternity!
Ye Birds, farewell!

3.

Farewell ye Flowers, farewell!
When Ye are fair, ye die;
I shall behold eternal bloom—
No chilly nights—no icy tomb—
No cloudy days—no hours of gloom
In yonder sky!
Ye Flowers, farewell!

4.

Farewell old Time, farewell!
Your power will soon be past;
I shall no more your subject prove—
Forever as your alien rove,
For Thou hast never given me love—

Again love's joys at last!
Old Time, farewell!

The sweet strains grew fainter, fainter,
As the two ascended heavenward;
With his hand clasped in the spirit's
The bleet poet left the drear world—
Left it, seeking for another.

Canto Second.

Soon beyond the ken of mortal
Did they soar up through the azure;
Higher, every moment higher—
Mounting as with eagle's pinions;
Now beneath them flowed the river—
Far beneath them—thread of silver
Winding till it reached the ocean;

Then the ocean rolled beneath them —
Great and mighty gleam of silver!
Now a cloud obscured their vision.
And the sword faded beneath it.
When the cloud passed, time, slowly,
Was the earth — a ball far distant!

Through the misty systems soaring
Hand in hand the travelers glided;
Soon the stars in distance faded,
And deep blackness stood before them.

When the two aerial travelers
Reached this piece of smoke-like vapor,
On the very verge they waited
For a moment; and the poet,
Gazing on the inky blackness,
Thus spoke to his fair conductor:

"Fair AEolen, why this blackness?

Why this pall of deepest midnight?"

"Then Æolen answered: "Loved one,
Hast thou heard of Styx's river?
We now on its brink are standing
Waiting for the gloomy boatman."

As she spoke, from out the blackness
There came sound of plashing water;
Softly did the sound come to them
Like that which is borne on breezes
To the ear of him who listeth
In the midnight's hour the water
Plashing 'gainst the piers that tower
To uphold a massive structure.

"What is that? loved one," the poet
Asked of the angelic spirit,
"Whence that strange sound in the distance
As if waves were in a tumult?"

"You shall see," replied Æolem.
And as thus she spoke there glided
From the darkness a strange shadow,
Which, as it approached them nearer,
To the poet's startled vision
Soon revealed a strange weird vessel.
Without oar or sail it glided
To the two who were in waiting.
At the helm an aged spirit
Could be seen holding a tiller,
Which he clasped in his long fingers;
And adown his back all hoary,
And upon his breast all hoary,
Flowed his hair and beard, whose whiteness
Showed most spectral in the midnight,
Making one think of the grave-clothes.

"It is Charon," spoke the fair one
In a whisper to the poet.

Then the two stepped on the vessel,

And away it swiftly glided
In the strange and Inky blackness;
And the vessel clove the darkness
Like as if 'twere limpid water;
And from off the prow the dark waves
Curled, as on the boat was driven
By the strange force which impelled it.

* * * *

Soon a strange sound in the distance
Could be heard, like demons curses;
Nearer came the awful howling—
Every moment drawing nearer;
All the air was filled with screamings,
And the poet's heart knew terror.

Like a tempest did the sound seem,
And it broke upon the vessel
With a force of awful power;
And the vessel rising, falling,

Was thrown further and thrown further;
Now it rose upon a billow—
Now it sank into a billow—
And it rolled in drunken frenzy
On the dark and gloomy river.

Suddenly an arm rose upward
From the maddened, stormy waters,
And the boat felt its fierce clutch
As it drew him from the vessel—
Drew him down, down in the waters—
Every moment sinking deeper.

In his ears he heard a roaring—
Fearful—frightful—most terrific;
Sound of devils yelling—screaming—
Laughter—crying wild in anguish—
Groaning—moaning—shrieks and curses
Of most fearful maledictions:
Then there came to him a stillness

Like that which the tomb discloses;
For the poet he had painted
At the awful, hellish terrors.

When the poet woke from swooning
Semi-darkness was around him,
Save at times when lurid flamings
Blazed around its sulphurous lightning;
Then a sudden would the darkness
Come again with all its terrors;
Thus, with light and darkness changing,
Hell revealed its many pictures.

The new comer felt a frenzy
As he saw around him terrors
Of deep hell's most fierce damnation,
And he drew his fingers swiftly —
Agonizing — o'er the harp-strings;
And there rose in hell's abysses
Sounds of wildest jangling discords,

Which came from the poet's fierce touch:
Now with wailings spoke the harp-string—
Now in curses spoke the harp-string—
Now in melody most heavenly—
Sweet as ever seraph's hand swept;
Then, a sudden, did the strain close
In the most heart-rending anguish.

At those sounds so strange and jangling,
Which did echo and re-echo
Through the tombs of dark perdition,
All the demons of hell's regions
Came with wings expanded, sailing,
On the air of sulphurous horrors
To the place where emanated
That strange music of the harp-string.

O, what language can describe them!
They were mighty in their stature;
Their huge wings when in expansion,

Seemed like clouds which roll in tempests;
An anon from those dark pinions
Vivid lightnings flashed and thundered;
When they spoke it seemed that earthquakes
Shook hell to its very centre!
Their fierce eyeballs glared like comets,
And it seemed that where their vision
Penetrated in the shadows
Horrid light illumed the darkness!
They had once been mighty warriors—
They had fought with Michael's angels;
And on many still the fierce scars,
That told of the heavenly battle,
Could be seen in frightful realness.

The fierce demons soon surrounded
Him who had produced the music
That had startled hell's proud minions,
And they asked the frightened poet
Who he was and whence he came from,

And what was that gold-strung object
Which gave forth such strange Aeolian music

Then the poet spoke unto them:
"Demons – such methinks ye must be –
I will tell you how I came here;
Who I am and what I'm seeking."

Then he told how on the planet
Known as Earth he was a poet.
Here the demons interrupted,
And their leader thus addressed him:
"Stranger to these hellish regions
Tell us, what is such a being?"

"Some souls born on yonder planet,"
Answered then the poet, "live there
Sep'rate from their fellow-beings,
For their souls are strung to music
Such as heaven vouchsafes to angels:

These are known on earth as poets,
And they sing to cheer their fellows
Through their pilgrimage and wand'rings;
And they sing with all the freedom
Of the sweet birds of the forest —
Sing the loves and sing the sorrows
That our life each day discloses —
Sing them for the simple reason
We must sing the songs within us!"

Then the poet told the sorrow
And the loves which had dwelt with him:
Told how he had loved the maiden;
Told how once his heart was broken;
Told how Æolen, the fair one,
Had at last appeared before him;
Told how they had left the drear world
Seeking the blest fields Elysian;
Told how when in Styx's river
He had been torn from his loved one

By some cruel fate beneath him;
Told how in the frightful horrors
He had swooned and reason left him;
Told how when he gained his reason
In the sulphurous hell about him
In his anguish he had quickly
Raised his hand and swept the harp-strings.

When he had told all his sorrows,
Kneeling down he prayed the demons
To deliver him from terrors,
And once more to his Æolen.

Then the leader of those demons
Answered thus: "I will deliver
Thee to blissful fields Elysian,
And to thy fair nymph Æolen,
On condition that thou sing'st us
A song worthy of a poet
Of the life on yonder planet

Which thou hast left for Elysium."

"If that be the task that frees me
From these horrors which surround me,
I will touch my harp most gladly!"
Answered then the hopeful poet,
Springing to his feet. "Now list ye:
'Tis a tale of earthly sorrow,"
And he touched his harp-strings gently,
Singing thus unto the demons:

The Isle of Doom.

Part First.

I.

What is this earth? A pleasant tomb,
With beauties shadowed o'er with gloom;
With flowers of hope, one moment fair,
The next they fade in viewless air!

The dew-drop trembles in the sun
When first the morning is begun —
The diamond sparkles on the flower,
But melts away in one short hour.

II.

See yon fair birds on outstretched wings
How beautiful! how sweet they sing!
It seems as though their songs were given
To let us hear some strain of heaven!
See yonder bird near by the tree —
A moment more of melody,
She nest within the leafy shade
Swift to her nest the goal is made;
Then out again on outstretched wings
Another song of joy she sings —
But see! a blaze of molten hell
Pours forth its wrath her doom to tell!
Her voice is hushed when in mid-song,
Her quivering form is borne along
On useless pinions to the earth

Where first the little life claimed birth.

III.

The virgin Rose with beauty crowned
Hangs on the bush; whilst all around
The air is filled with sweet perfume—
Her breathings drive away all gloom!
Fairest of flowers we call her name,
And well does she deserve the fame,
For not outside of Eden blows
A fairer flower than you, sweet Rose!
But whilst her beauties are most gay
She droops, and withering fades away.

IV.

Have you not seen when Phœbus gains
In yonder West his peaceful plains,
How flame the bright clouds in the sky
With colors of most perfect dye?
Perchance athwart their forms is seen
His wearing sword in golden sheen!
But soon—ah, soon—all disappears

As Night, with pialling darkness, nears.

V.

And Man — is he exempt from death?
Nay, poisoned is his first-drawn breath;
His very joys are ever made
From texture of a sombre shade;
His happiest hopes are but a dream —
A phantom light — a fancy beam —
Which leads him on o'er land and wave
Only to reach his goal — the grave!

VI.

But to our tale. . Songstress of Love
Leave for an instant those labours,
And aid a bard who needs thee much
With thy sweet voice and gentle touch,
So that my lyre may sound a lay
Which shall endure beyond a day!

VII.

There is an island in the sea
Where waves dash most tempestuously;

Through peace or storm, with angry roar
They ever beat the rocky shore;
And there the spray eternal leaps,
Seeking to climb the rocky steeps;
In the attempt the clouds uprise
And veil the azure of the skies.

VIII.

Back from this chaos, in the isle,
There do we see sweet Nature's smile:
With trees, and rocks, and purling rills,
Here is the balm for all our ills —
Whilst, in the distance, mellowing sweet
We hear the fierce waves' angry beat!

IX.

There is within a peaceful bay
Where ripples laugh the hours away;
Feeling secure far from the shore
Where foam the waves with furious roar.
'Tis guarded from the angry deep
By promontories high and steep,

Between whose high and shadowy arms
An inlet leads from sea alarms.
But it requires a seaman great
To steer his vessel through this gate,
For one false move the tiller gave
Would ope for him a watery grave.

X.

Near this bright sheet of water stands
A castle high, whose site commands
For miles a view of land and sea —
Looking above the rock and tree
Like some old sentinel of the past —
Aged but strong, unshaken, fast!
It must have been that when 'twas reared
By human hands Titans appeared
And built the structure upon high
Defying earth, and sea, and sky!

XI.

And many storms have beat thereon,
But in the conflict they have worn

But ill success – for there it towers,
Defying still their utmost powers!

XII.

Here lived Don Anglos, whose strong arm
Had often waved with deadly harm
His sword against the enemy
Upon the land and on the sea;
And at his very name the foe
Bair terror and their overthrow!

XIII.

But now he very seldom went
Beyond his island continent;
For age was silvering his hair,
And he desired in peace to share
His island home with her – his child:
Floreen the beautiful and mild!

XIV.

And was she fair? Ah, yes – so fair
One might have thought her child of air –
A goddess born – rivaling the one!

Who is a sister to the Sun;
Or she known in the realms above
And earth beneath, as Queen of Love!
She wore upon her brow the sign
Of truth and purity divine!
And in that eye there you might see
A soul unsullied, chaste and free!
One, scorning the deceitful smile;
One that knew not a thought of guile—
Aye, one who ever could upraise
Her face unto an angel's gaze!

XV.

Her eyes were dark as midnight hour!
Large—full of language, love, and power:
Like unto those of the gazelle
When it is chased into the dell:
It turns its eyes to you with fear,
And yet a half-trust lingers near!
Could ye have seen her as she stood
In her unclouded womanhood

Methinks ye could not then abstain
From loving her even though 'twere bane!

XVI.

O Virtue! thou must claim thy birth
From other sphere than that of earth!
Thou art the simile of heaven—
Thou wouldst be such thought to hell driven!
Earth can no more produce thy form
Than she can quiet Sorrow's storm!
O Virtue! thy great name is light!—
A blazing star in Chaos night!—
A ray sent flaming from the throne
Where God Eternal sits alone!

XVII.

'Tis evening and far in the west
Sweet Hesperus glows—Eve's star confessed;
The deep blue ether, like a sea,
Shows a sublime eternity!
No cloud doth hide the face of Night
As Cynthia seeks the heavenly height;

Calm and serene, with maiden train,
She smiling mounts the heavenly plain.
Hushed is all Nature, save the roar
Of waves upon that rocky shore —
How strangely blended is the hush
Of evening with th' impetuous rush
Of those fierce waves, as 'gainst the rock
They dash and melt with awful shock!

XVIII.

Still higher mounts the heavenly queen;
Upon the water glows her sheen;
Upon those hills in snowy light
It mellowing falls, transcendent bright.
A silvery path to heaven it seems
As on the glassy bay it streams:
All Nature rests beneath the smile
Of yon fair Moon — a silvery isle!

XIX.

So does it seem to those who ride
Upon the ocean's heaving tide:

The ship with wings filled with the wind
Cleaves yon blue waves and leaves behind
A track of dancing, seething snow;
Which falls upon the sea below.

XX.

Near and more near unto the shore
Draws yon fair ship. The rocks before
Grow larger as they reach the ken
Of those sea-daring, brave-born men;
The sound of breakers reach the ear,
But they know not a thought of fear;
The promontories seem to stand
Like giants keeping them from land.
But still the ship, with unchecked speed,
Like an untiring, dashing steed,
Comes nearer to that fatal coast
As if to show how vain the boast
Of those fierce rocks and maddened waves
And she defies their darkest graves.

XXI

Now she is near the shore, and he

Who guides the ship so fearlessly,
With eye fixed on the towering height,
One instant sees a pale, red light—
Quick turns the helm—all hold their breath,
As they pass through the jaws of death;
One moment more a cheer is given
As the great ship is onward driven;
Safely within, upon the bay,
She queenly rides—the ripples play
Around her prow; then shoreward run—
So glad to think the victory's won!

XXII.

Onward the vessel glides till near
The further shore where doth appear
The castle, rearing high its towers;
Round goes the vessel; spray in showers
Leaps in the air as anchors fall.
A firm voice, which is heard by all,
Gives the command. Soon toward the shore
The small boats glide—nought but the oar

Breaks silence till the grating sand
Tells them that they have reached the land.

Part Second.

An evil genius, filled with hate,
Is in the world, fiend incarnate.
Desiring Beauty for a toy
He seeks that he may it destroy:
"Destroy! Destroy!" his only cry—
All hear and all prepare to die!
Where'er he sees the fairest flower
He swears to end its happy hour,
And hastes to where it rears its head
To breathe the curses of the dead.
The fairest flower feeling his blight
Doth trembling bid farewell to light;
With withered form and panting breath
It yields itself a prey to death!

Near where the "clouds of shadowy gloom

Spread gray wings o'er the Isle of Doom,
Another island can be seen
When no fog-curtains roll between.
This isle, unlike the former one,
Is bleak and barren; and the sun
E'en when he shines giveth a chill
Unto the place, as though some ill
Unholy thing did therein dwell—
A spirit or a fiend of hell!

III.

Here dwell strange men of cruel mien,
Who are ashamed to e'er be seen
Save when the Night spreads her dark pall,
And brings the silence unto all;
Then do they seek the ocean's tide
And on its heaving bosom ride.
And many nights could tell a tale
Which would the face of bravest pale!

IV.

On the same evening that the crew

Of that swift vessel came in view
Of the smooth bay and castle grand
These men push from the pebbly sand;
Now on the foam-capped billows ride
And o'er the gloomy waters glide
To where a schooner, waiting, rests
Upon the ocean's heaving breast;
The oars in even motions rise
And from each blade the bright spray flies!
Soon they have reached the vessel's side
And now within the shadows hide
For one short moment; then they leap
Upon the vessel now asleep.

V.

Not long asleep can she remain:
She soon must dash the mighty main
From off her prow in curling spray,
While breezes sing, "Away! Away!"
Soon must she plow the dark blue deep,
Or o'er those billowy mountains leap;

Soon must her wings receive the wind,
Soon must she leave the shore behind.

VI.

She now awakes from out her sleep
And seeks to ride upon the deep;
Slowly at first as if afraid,
She calls the breezes to her aid;
The breezes answer to her cry
And quick to her relief they fly;
Her billowing sails receive the wind
And soon the land is left behind!

VII.

Upon the deck the captain stands
And in a deep voice gives commands;
The men obey his every word
As if the voice of Jove they heard.
Large, powerful and strong is he,
And in his heart dwells cruelty—
Aye, cruelty that only knows
Blood, war and death suits his foes!

Some thirty years he has known time,
But during these in deepest crime
His soul has reveled, until now
'Tis black as midnight's awful brow!

XVIII.

'Tis still as death upon the deck
Save when the master gives his beck
Unto the sailors; then they speak
As answering a demon's shriek:
Scarcely a whisper can be heard—
'Tis only the most silent word.
Sometime the wheel is heard to speak
And then 'tis by a mournful creak.

IX.

On flies the vessel; now a name
Breaks on the ear like thunder's flame:
"Demar! steer toward those rocks of gray
Where lies that island's inland bay!"

Part Third.

I.

Peace dwells within Don Anglo's home;
No longer doth the master roam,
And Floreen smiles a heavenly smile
And feels secure on this lone isle.

II.

Within a room of antique mould
Here dwell these two – the young, the old;
The sun some hours before to rest
Has sweetly sunk in ocean's breast;
The stars have peeped forth one by one,
The moon now shines in place of sun,
For now the Night ascends her throne
And grasps the sceptre as her own.

III.

Upon the walls within the room
War armaments light up the gloom.
There by the candle's flickering light
Don Anglo's sword doth glisten bright.

Here guns are seen and daggers steel,
And all the arms which death can conceal.

IV.

These arms of death, in terror bright,
Would give to fearful ones a fright;
But the old man he loves them well
For each of war and blood doth tell—
Tells how his arm of steel has wrought
Confusion with the foes he fought.

V.

'Tis some three hours since the bright sun
Has through heaven's vault his courses run;
Floreen near by her father's chair
Is sitting in a listening air
While the old silvery-headed man
Relates some tale which memories fan
Into a flame, until the past
Before him in bright light is cast;
He rears in thought the sword on high,
And thunders to the foe to "Die!"

His fingers clinch th' imagined steel
And all his pulses tinglings feel;
His aged face is flushed with fire
And his dimmed eyes are filled with ire.

VI.

At this part of Don Anglos' tale
A sound is heard! Florean turns pale
And trembling rises to her feet
While quickly do her pulses beat,
For the deep, bellowing sound is one
Which only comes from mouth of gun.
"Who is it, father?" asks Florean.
"'Tis Bertram! Let the light be seen!"

VII.

With step as light as fall of snow
But swift as sunbeam she doth go
Up to the castle's lonely tower
Where wild rats scamper, spiders lower,
And bats hang with teeth chattering;
And owls with fearful eye and wing;

And cob-webs hang from many a beam—
All looking like a horrid dream!
But nought the maiden thinks of these:
Her mind is on a ship she sees
Which cometh toward her with its sail
All bellowing free to catch the gale;
For with it comes her lover brave—
Her light shall guide him from the wave!

VIII.

With fingers swift she draws the spark;
The torch flames up—illumes the dark,
And out to yon fair ship its ray
Flies swiftly and doth show the way
Between those awful mounds of rock—
It is the key that opes the lock!
Without the light but few would dare
At this night hour to enter there.
Yet there is one who sails the main
Who can that inland harbor gain!

IX.

For some few moments Floreen waits

(How quickly her heart palpitates!)
But soon there cometh to her ear
The faintest echoings of a cheer;
Then 'round some rocks upon the bay
She sees the vessel wend its way.
Tall, stately, beautiful! it seems
As Cynthia casts on it her beams!
"Thank heaven!" Florreen cries, "they are free
From yonder rocks of cruelty!"
The guiding torch extinguished lies
And down the castle's stairs she flies.
Soon comes brave Bertram with his men
And views with joy Florreen again.
She sees her hero safe from harms
And then runs sobbing to his arms.

X.

O! who can sing of human love
And be unmoved! Methinks above
Where dwell the pure, in glorious heaven,
No sweeter joy to them is given!

Without it life is full of gloom —
A barren waste — a moldy tomb!
Take human love from Adam's seed
And devils damned on earth will breed!

XI.

What makes a hell? 'Tis loss of love!
If love were there the pangs that move
In wild contortions through the soul
Would be but trifles! Waves that roll
Lapped red with hell-spray would but seem
Nought but the fancies of a dream!
O human love! — essence divine!
Thy light through all the earth doth shine
Like flamings from the god of day —
Night disappears before thy ray!

XII.

Brave Bertram's men, in groups around,
Soon in the castle's rooms are found;
The servants run now there, now here,
And the old master gives the cheer:

"You're welcome – every one!" cries he,
"Make merry all, brave company;
Let every heart this joyful night
Be free from care and sorrow's blight!
To see each old familiar face
Brings to my heart its early grace,
When Anglos' name was known and feared
By many foes when we appeared
Upon the sea! How oft we fought
Those enemies who conquest sought –
But sought in vain when men they met
As firm as suns in ether set!
But then ye knew of my command –
Now do ye feel brave Bertram's hand;
Ye are the same, though, – still the same –
I love you all – each comrade's name
Brings memory fresh to me again
And tells me these are brave, brave men!"

XIII.

The old man pauses, and a tear

Falls from his cheek – a pealing cheer
Breaks from the men: "Huzza!" they cry;
"Live, live! Don Anglos! Never die!"

XIV

Apart from these the lovers rest –
Floreen's head lies on Bertram's breast;
He holds her tiny hand to tell
The old, old tale they know so well!
He speaks of dangers he has passed
As conqueror since they met last;
He tells that in the deadly strife
The thought of her gave stronger life
Unto his arm when o'er the foe
He raised the sword to deal the blow!

XV.

Time passes on. The midnight hour
Comes silently to the old tower;
The sky o'erhead a cloud reveals,
Which slowly on sweet Cynthia steals;
It seeks to kiss her silvery face

And hold her in its dark embrace;
But she from it to azure skies,
Like Arethusa, swiftly flies!

XVI

At this mid-hour there may be seen
A fleet-winged schooner come between
Those rocky heights; and whilst yon cloud
A moment Cynthia's face doth shroud,
It steals to where now lies asleep
The empress of the mighty deep;
And from its sides, a moment more,
A blaze of molten hell doth pour:
The ship awakes with panting breath
And shudders at the sight of death!

XVII.

Within the castle, at the sound,
The warriors look in terror round;
For one short instant fear doth trace
Dire consternation on each face!
But suddenly a voice is heard:

"Arm! warriors!" - Bertram speaks the word.
Then every heart and every hand
Leaps to obey the stern command.
The falchions quiver in the light,
And coward Fear then takes its flight!

XVIII.

With ashy face the maiden stands
And in her grief she wrings her hands;
Her lover whispers - "Fare thee well
Until we meet," - it seems a knell!
One burning kiss and then alone
Floreen stands, whilst a feeble moan
Escapes her lips; then to her fears
There comes the soothing balm - her tears.

XIX.

As Bertram's men rush to the shore
And they behold the wrath outpour
Upon their loved and helpless ship
Deep curses rise to every lip.
"'Tis Dazan's work!" one warrior cries -

"See! yonder shine his ensign flies!"
"Death! Death to Dazan!" is the word;
Each waves on high his glittering sword
And swears by heaven and earth and hell
This night shall Dazan's death-knell tell!

XX

"Quick to the boats!" the Leader cries –
"Too late!" – the smoke and flames arise
From their loved vessel's side, where rent
And torn the crashing ball was sent!
Ah, how those amorous flames disgrace
The fated ships in fond embrace! –
It seems a score of Tarquins rush
To give one pure Lucrece the blush!
A horrid glare illumes the sky,
Dark smoke in clouds mount upon high;
Chaste Cynthia blushes at the sight
And yonder stars are hid in night!

XXI

The enemy now sails away

Some distance down the placid bay;
And then she folds her wings and rests
At anchor on the water's breast—
Like some foul demon who would see
Its victim die in agony!

XXII.

Now comes that death in horrors shewn—
The flames have reached the magazine;
A sound which tears the azure skies
Comes to all ears and terrifies;
The smoke ascends and flies away,
And once again Night's silver ray
Illumes the bay where stood the queen—
But nought of her can now be seen.

XXIII.

See! Dazan's men now wield the oar,
And soon their small boats touch the shore,
Then all the warriors fall in line
And move with marches serpentine;
They come o'er hill—through miry fen—

To give surprise to Bertram's men.

XXIV.

But Bertram's men see the design
And wait all motionless in line
Behind a massive rock so high
Its shadow hides them from the eye:
No word is spoken as they stand
A fearless and revengeful band.

XXV.

On comes the foe - then Bertram cries:
"Death! death to Dazan!" - each sword flies
With lightning flash above the foe,
And adrift then falls the deadly blow!
"Death! death to Dazan!" - echoes scream,
And blood flows in a rushing stream
From Dazan's warriors - quick they fly
In fearful panic; but the cry
Of Bertram's men is heard behind
Pursuing like a winter's wind!

* * * * * *

XXVI.

Clouds have obscured the stars above
And sighing breezes restless move
Among the tree-tops; darkness lowers—
As though the wings of hell's dread powers
Were overshadowing earth below—
Presaging terror and deep woe!

XXVII.

As silent as the darkened tomb,
Within the castle, is the room
Where sweet Floreen and father wait
To hear how goes the sword of fate.
Her head is pillowed on his breast—
There is her only place of rest.
The moments pass so slowly by
It seems on broken wings they fly!

XXVIII.

What is that sound? A step is heard
Floreen starts up like startled bird;
The thought runs swiftly through her brain—
'Tis Bertram heralding his train!

But no! her door does not greet—
Don Anglos rises to his feet
And grasps his sword! there in the gloom
Stands DAZAN, silent as the tomb!

XXIX.

"What seek you, fiend?" Don Anglos cries,
While angry fire darts from his eyes—
"Speak! if thou canst!—if not, my sword
Shall make thy life-blood speak a word!"
And with his sword in hand he leaps
Where stands the warrior of the deeps—
The sword comes down upon the foe
But Dazan's sword receives the blow.

XXX.

At this reception Dazan's voice
Finds tongue to speak: "Old man, rejoice
That I can patiently forbear
To give your death-blow. Your gray hair
Protects you from my angry blade
Else at this moment you, a shade,

In death's dark icy gloom would roam,
Far from this place, your island home!
I will allow you liberty
If you will yield your maid to me."

XXXI.

"Insulting Monster!" — Anglo's cry
Breaks forth in wrath — "prepare to die!
Hell is thy portion!" — and his sword
Ends with a blow his angry word.
Hard on the helmet's crest it falls —
The sparks fly off! — the craven calls:
"Help! help! Demar!" Then to his side
Another form is seen to glide.

XXXII.

"Ha! Do you call this bravery,
To leap like tigers on to me —
Two swords to one?" cries the old man:
"Come on, then, cowards — come and fan
Your dying courage to a flame
And learn respect for Anglos' name!"

XXXIII.

Then sounds of clashing swords arise—
Don Anglos' sword with swiftness flies
Now here, now there, in rays of light,
It seems a thousand giants fight!
His conquering blows both men appall—
He drives the foe back to the wall!
One moment more and angry death
Shall make each coward yield his breath—
But no! foul Dazan's pistol gleams
A moment—then the bright fire streams
In Anglos' heart—the deep red blood
Comes to his mouth in ghastly flood—
No more can he know earth's charms—
He sinks in grim Death's waiting arms!

XXXIV.

"Quick! let us fly!"—'tis Dazan's cry;
They seize the maiden, then they fly
With hasty steps down to the shore;
There floats a boat—they seize the oar
And swiftly wend their watery way

"To where the schooner, down the bay,
I'm waiting rests. Floreen, thy bear
To Dazan's berth and leave her there—
A swooning captive. Dazan stands
Upon the deck and gives commands.

XXXV.

The breeze has freshened to a gale;
The moon anon shows wan and pale
As swiftly clouds each other chase
Across that virgin beauty's face!
Now glides the schooner like a ghost
Toward yonder angry, roaring coast.
She nears those awful jaws of death
With glad wings spread and quickened breath;
Her master's touch she seems to feel—
'Tis Dazan's hand that holds the wheel!

XXXVI.

As the glad vessel onward springs
Floreen awakes; then memory brings
The past before her anguished mind

In horror's glare; the chains that bind
Her spotless soul to Dazan's power
She sees are forged from this sad hour—
"Is there no angel's hand to save?"
She sadly cries—"Is there no grave?"

XXXVII.

From yonder hanging light a ray
Tells of escape and shows the way:
Upon a dagger's blade it falls—
Here is the grave for which she calls!
Another instant in her hand
She has the knife at her command;
The fatal plunge is almost made—
But no!—she shall not feel the blade!

XXXVIII.

With beating heart she tries the door—
It yields!—she hears the ocean's roar,
And steps on deck—the wild wind's breath
Blows rudely—on each side is death:
The boat is passing now between

That awful gate: like ghosts are seen
On either side the towering rock
Where wild waves melt with thunder shock!
O, how those billows scream and roar
And beat in wrath the rocky shore!
It seems that demons here must dwell,
For here behold a writhing hell!

XXXIX.

Along the deck the maiden flies:
One moment more the dagger lies
In Dagan's heart! — he yields his breath —
The wheel turns round; and waiting Death,
With hungry teeth and laughter gay,
Receives the vessel as his prey!

When the poet's strain was ended
All hell's minions loud applauded;
And the leader of the demons
Took the poet on his pinion,

And with swiftness of the eagle
Winged his flight up through the darkness.

Long the demon spread his pinions
Through the dark clouds that rushed past him;
But at last a strange light glimmered
Like a star before his vision.
Then he said unto the poet:
"Do you see that strange light yonder?"
And the poet answered: "Clearly."
"Then thou'lt find the land Elysium
By the forces of attraction,"
Said the other. Then the demon
Freed the poet from his pinion,
And sank down again to darkness.

By that strange attraction drawing
The glad poet reached Elysium.
There he found his fair AEolen
Once again, in all her beauty.—

Ah, what string can sing the rapture
Of his heart as he beheld her!
"O, Æolen!" cried the poet,
"There shall be no separation!"

Listeners – ye who heard my harp tell
Of the poet's sleep in Dreamland –
How at last he reached the haven
Where he met his fair Æolen –
Do ye know that he who dreamed this
Ne'er awoke from his deep slumber?

Samuel Watson Wheeler.

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